

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 have been canceled. New claims 7-10 have been added. It should be appreciated that the new claims merely clarify the invention described in the specification, and do not add new matter.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Armstrong (US 3,552,295). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

U.S. Patent Number 3,552,295 discloses an air directing grill 10 for directing air emerging from an air vent into a vehicle's passenger compartment. The grill 10 includes a plastic frame 12, and a plurality of horizontal louvers 22 and vertical louvers 24. A control member 52 is supported on one of the horizontal louvers to adjust the position of the louvers. The control member includes a knob 53 having an upper portion 54 joined to a lower portion 56 along a break line 58, to allow linear sliding movement of the control member along the length of the horizontal vane 22. The knob also includes an upwardly extending guide tab 62 on the lower portion of the knob, which extends into an elongated slot 64 that extends through a portion of the length of the middle louver 22, to limit the lateral sliding movement of the control member 52 with respect to the vane. A spring clip 66 is located in the slot 64 on the top and bottom surfaces of the louver, between the upper and lower portions of the knob, to eliminate rattling between the knob and the louver. The control member 52 also includes two rearwardly projecting flanges 74, 76 that define a slot 78 extending perpendicular to the sliding movement of the knob. In operation, the knob slides along the middle horizontal louver, in order to adjust the vertically oriented louvers. (Column 4, lines 21-25). Armstrong does not disclose a control knob fixedly secured to a louver, such that the louver and control knob move together as one to adjust the position of the louver.

In contradistinction, claim 7, which is similar to claim 1, discloses a vent control knob for controlling the position of a vane for an air vent in an automotive vehicle. The vane D includes a front edge A, and an opposed rear edge B having a notch C formed in the rear edge B. The control knob 12 includes an outer surface and an inner surface 14 that defines a recess. A first portion of the inner surface is adjacent a rear edge of the vane, and a second portion of the inner surface is adjacent the front edge of the vane. The knob also includes a side having a portion 16 that is open, for receiving the vane within the recess. The recess defined by the inner surface of the knob is slightly larger than the outer surface of the vane, so that the knob snaps onto the vane, to fittingly engage the knob onto the vane. A compressively resilient silicone pad 18 is received into the notched portion C of the rear edge B of the vane D. The pad extends beyond the rear edge B to contact the first portion 20 of the inner surface of the knob 12, so as to consistently force the front edge A of the vane into contact with the second portion 22 of the inner surface of the knob. A sturdy and tight fit is maintained between the knob and the vane, so that the knob and the vane move together when changing the direction of the vents. Claim 10 is similar to claim 7, and includes further limitations.

Armstrong '295 does not disclose, anticipate or otherwise suggest the claimed invention of claim 7. Armstrong '295 merely discloses knob having an upper and lower portion joined together around a middle vane to permit linear sliding movement of the knob with respect to the vane. Armstrong does not disclose a knob having an inner surface that defines a recess and the vane is fixedly engaged within the recess, as disclosed by the Applicant. Further, Armstrong does not disclose a knob having an inner surface dimensioned slightly larger than the outer surface of the vane, so that the vane is fittingly engaged in the knob, as is also disclosed by the

Applicant. A sliding attachment between the two members is structurally and functionally not the same as a fixed attachment.

Also, Armstrong merely discloses a slot extending transversely through part of the length of the louver, as best shown in Figures 2 and 5, for receiving a guide tab for controlling the sliding movement of the knob with respect to the vane. While Armstrong does disclose a notch in the rear edge of the vane, the purpose of the notch is to prevent an interference between the horizontal vane and the motion of a swing bar, during adjustment of the vertically oriented vanes. Armstrong does not disclose a notch in the rear edge of the vane for receiving a resilient pad that forces the front edge of the vane into contact with a second portion of the inner surface of the knob to provide a snug fit between the vane and the knob, as disclosed by the Applicant. The snug fit is advantageous because it insures that the knob and vane move together as one during adjustment of the vane. The notch in the rear of the vane as disclosed by the Applicant is functionally distinguishable from the clearance cutout disclosed by Armstrong.

Armstrong also discloses a spring clip positioned in the slot in the vane to prevent rattling between the knob and the vane. The spring includes an upper and lower arm joined by a bight portion. This structure is clearly distinguishable from the resilient pad disclosed by the Applicant, since the resilient pad provides a compressive force on the rear edge of the vane to urge the front edge of the vane into contact with a second portion of the inner surface of the knob. There is a significant structural and functional difference between the spring clip disposed in a slot extending along the vane as disclosed by Armstrong and the pad disposed in the notch in the rear of the vane, as disclosed by the Applicant.

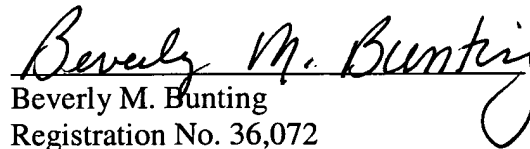
Thus, Armstrong is clearly distinguishable from the present invention because the sliding attachment of the knob relative to the vane is not the same as the fixed attachment of the knob to

the vane disclosed by the present invention. It is further distinguishable because the spring clip is located in a slot extending along the vane is not the same as the pad disposed in the notch in the rear of the vane, as disclosed by the present invention. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 7 and 10 and the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claims 2-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Armstrong. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons set forth above with respect to new claims 7 and 10.

Based on the above, Applicant submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner finds to the contrary, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned in charge of this application be called at the telephone number given below to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,


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